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Duxbury Clipper

A Fable

By JOHN BRITTEN

Once upon a time, long ago and far away, there was a simple little village by a bay with quaint houses; mostly a mix of classic Cape Cod and Federal houses known as Captain's houses. Over the years the village economy went through several changes at various times, harboring shoemakers, boat



builders, hostelry owners and such. Throughout those years, however, the housing stock of the village went largely unchanged. Oh, a former tavern might be

converted into a home or vice versa. Homes might be moved depending on the whim of the owner and the skill of local tradesmen. But by and large the homes remained unchanged, Capes and Federals; four walls, a simple roof and windows that were of the same size and type more or less. Some with shutters, some without.

As other towns in the area grew and "kept up with the times," the little village became a forgotten backwater with little to recommend it. No more tinkers, no more boat builders. Certainly no shopping arcades or theatres or fancy restaurants or hotels or convention sites. No burger joints or nightclubs or big book chains. And no big houses. Just simple little Capes and Captain's houses. Four walls, a simple roof and windows of the same size and type more or less. Some with shutters, some without.

And then a funny thing happened. As those other towns grew large and offered all the amenities that the other folks thought they needed, the little village began to be perceived not as a backwater anachronism, but a charming retreat from the sprawl and ugliness, the unchecked remaking of other towns boasting of new business, new views and new houses. Lots of new houses. And as these towns "just grewed," the little village of former tinkers and tailors, builders and sailors, started to attract attention as the prettiest little village in the realm. Of particular note was the attractiveness of the homes, street upon street of mostly white Capes and Captain's houses. White houses with four walls, a simple roof and windows of the same size and type more or less. Some with shutters, some without.

If one needed proof that the homes were the main feature of the town aside from a beautiful bay, one only need look around. No malls, no bowling alleys, no high rises, no fancy country clubs. What else then could be the attraction? So the little village by the bay became a magnet for well-heeled aficionados of charm. And then slowly, but with a gathering momentum, some little Capes began to disappear. Then a Federal here or there. Nothing major mind you, but just a little change in the landscape. A blip on the architectural landscape. But as years went on, the sizes grew and grew until suddenly, one roofline wasn't sufficient. And there weren't enough windows of the same type and size to go around. So multi-roofs went up, the more peaks and valleys the better. And the windows became varied and the bigger the better. And curves began to show up. And bricks and concrete and steel. And the little Capes and former stately Federals with four walls, a simple roof and windows that were of the same size and type more or less, some with shutters and some without, began to look smaller and smaller and more and more out of place.

And so, over time, the little village by the bay, became the *big* village by the bay and continued to attract buyers eager to build bigger and better homes, homes more suitable to a *big* village by the bay. And when eventually, the last old house in the former small village was torn down a small plaque was laid on the site by several elderly residents that read, "Here lay a simple house with four walls, a simple roof and windows of the same size and type more or less. Some with shutters and some without."